SAROJINI NAIDU VANITA MAHA VIDYALAYA

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(Sponsored & Managed jointly by Osmania Graduates' Association and Exhibition Society)
Exhibition Grounds, Nampally, Hyderabad. Ph-04024603266
NAAC Accredited (3rd Cycle)

Two-Day National E-Conference On

Language & Literature

28th & 29th May 2020

Organized by

Department of Languages
(English, French, Hindi, Telugu, Sanskrit, Urdu and Arabic)

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SOCIAL MEDIA AS A LEARNING TOOL FOR INDIAN LANGUAGES AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

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Abstract

The Coronavirus pandemic brought all physical teacher-learner classroom learning to a standstill. The physical lockdown also gave rise to a boom in digital content creation. A sudden change was witnessed in Indian Institutions as well as educational institutions across the globe rapidly shifting towards online teaching. The lockdown also provided individuals to make a mark on the digital space. Such is the case with individuals who began initiatives relating to literature on social media. The case in focus here are '*Mother Tongue Twisters*' and '*Apalam Chapalam*' on Instagram. Both initiatives began during the lockdown period and so far, have made a considerable effort in bringing-in an audience closer to literature through the use of platforms which are most comfortable for people to function - Instagram and Facebook. Another initiative is a series of literature related podcasts named '*Lit Nama*' which is not a product of pandemic but plays a crucial factor in this case-study based research. This study also tries to explore the factor on how the open-access content generated by these initiatives can be structured for the use of teaching literature. The platforms in focus are Instagram, Facebook, Zoom Meeting App, YouTube and Spotify. The focus on engagement and community building for promotion of Literature is the fundamental core of this study.

Keywords: Social Media, Language Learning, ICT, Social Networking, Pedagogy, Translation, Literature, Translated Literature, OERs

Introduction and Review of Literature

In the COVID-19 pandemic situation, digital media is playing a pivotal role for learners throughout the spectrum for attaining sustainable education. More and more students and academicians alike are looking for digital resources to access information. This has considerably reduced the geographical boundaries and space of information which has further resulted in education no longer being reduced to chalk-and-duster or four-walled classroom system. Technology is indeed revolutionizing the world into a global village and social media is one of the key factors leading the change. There are both pros and cons in digitalization of education. However, the rapid change seems to have been much needed especially in the learning of language and literature. (Devi, Kuruva & Gouthami, E & Lakshmi, 2019)

It is to be taken into consideration that although there are huge benefits associated with learning from social media, the general behaviour associated with the same platforms is to consume or create content and then move on to consumption or creation of more content. The amount of new content generated is quite high which is both a pro and a con. The pros involve up-to-date information being provided with the use of the latest features available. The cons may involve a lesser retention value as there will always be newer content available for consumption and also it takes some time for a learner to get adjusted to a Learning Management System (LMS). (Oriji & Anikpo, 2019)

The behavioral perception poses a unique dilemma for social media to be used as a learning tool. Yet, the pros overpower the cons for the simplest reason that the physical alternative of a classroom is not present under the pandemic situation. Secondly, the sense of connectivity that the platforms generate is something that is almost a possible alternative of a physical classroom. However, it might be difficult to create a rigid distinction between an informal conversation and a formal learning space especially relating to language and literature. (Delello, McWhorter & Camp, 2015)

Overview, Analysis and Conclusion

Case Study 1: Mother Tongue Twisters (MTT) - Instagram and Facebook

MTT, an initiative by Mohini Gupta, is *"a comprehensive multilingual, digital platform with original and curated contemporary poetry in Indian languages. It aims to weave stories and sounds from the Indian collective conscience, drawing from the heterogeneity of the multi-layered 'Indian experience'".* This unique initiative provides regular content which is contemporary and more relevant to young audiences. It is also attempting to change the stereotypes developed relating to languages. For instance, the perception of 'Bhojpuri' language is that through Bollywood movies which portrays it as coarse one. Gupta posted a sweet and gentle lullaby bringing the other side of the coin to the forefront.

Translation Thursdays (on Zoom App with live streaming on Facebook): A weekly virtual meet-up on Zoom App with live streaming on Facebook involving Mohini having a conversation with a translating author discussing their work, theories, views, insights, tricks, tips, techniques etc. on translation. In the short while that the initiative has existed, it has already held meet-ups with known national and international authors such as *Mamta Sagar, Saif Mahmood, Jerry Pinto, Rita Kothari, Arunava Sinha, Sampurna Chattarji* and *Lawrence Schimel*. At the time of writing this paper, the scheduled meet-ups included writers *Salim M Hussain, Dr Saba Bashir, L Somi Roy* and *Ros Schwartz.* For the ones who have low continuous internet bandwidth or no continuous bandwidth, the recording of the meet-up is shared in the

Facebook Group of the initiative to be able to access later. One who attends the virtual meet gets an opportunity to interact and directly ask a question, in real-time, to the author. In case, one still has any queries or because of the time limitation of the meet-up the author is unable to answer any question, Gupta then takes all the questions and acts as a moderator to get them answered through email. This promotes the idea of connectivity and stronger engagement.

Case Study 2: Apalam Chapalam - Instagram

Apalam Chapalam is an initiative to collate 'Travelling stories for children' by Leher India - a child rights organisation working to make child protection a shared responsibility. The individuals behind this initiative *Mandovi Menon* and *Aliya Khan* aim to provide young audiences with not just creative fun-to-consume content but also to keep the tradition of oral storytelling alive. Starting out with languages Hindi and Marathi, the platform now hosts English stories as well and plans to add other languages such as Bengali, Tamil and Malayalam. The content posted here is mostly a 5-10 minutes video with a storyteller narrating a story. Within 4-weeks of existence, the initiative has seen 1500+ followers. It has also seen authors, translators, performers eagerly participating in this initiative and keeping alive the oral tradition of regional language and translated stories.

Case Study 3: Lit Nama - Podcast - Soundcloud/Spotify (Also, available on YouTube)

An Initiative by IVM Podcasts where the host of the podcast (free audio broadcast) Laxmi Krishnan talks to *"the new agents of literary culture on her show. She plunges deep into the new genres of literature born in this digital era as she talks to the performers, storytellers, bloggers, poets and writers".* The show with around 20 aired episodes, so far, has been using the audio-medium to document the contemporary perceptions of literature. Similar to other case-studies, the content created is for free and for open public use. The perceptions recorded are unique and simple. It does have a barrier of only English and Hindi language content so far but this type of content is easily shareable and due to its structured episodic release of content, can be directly used to teach and engage learners about literature in a periodic manner.

The different types of Platforms in focus here:

1. Instagram: An internet-based photo and video-sharing social networking application
2. Facebook: An internet-based social networking website and application
3. YouTube: A video-sharing social networking website
4. Soundcloud and Spotify: Audio-based digital music services providing access to songs and podcasts

5. Zoom Meeting App: A software to hold person-to-person(s) digital communication via live video conferencing

When we combine all the above types of content in a structured manner, there is a possibility of creating an entire multi-lingual course on Contemporary Indian Literature with updated perceptions and appealing graphics. The content is not just publicly available but is also on platforms which are much more preferred than physical classrooms. The core value among all the social-media platforms are interactivity and engagement. Both values are the need of the hour for education in general and not just digital education.

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About the College

Sarojini Naidu Vanita Maha Vidyalaya, one of the premier educational institutions for women, established in 1962, located in Hyderabad, Telangana State. It is sponsored and managed jointly by the Osmania Graduates' Association and Exhibition Society. The college offers value-based education at Intermediate, Degree, P.G and MBA levels. The college has a highly qualified and dedicated staff. The college is well equipped with digital classrooms, a library with 65000 books, audio-visual aids. The college also has a spacious sports arena, science and computers laboratories, language labs, a well-maintained hostel and an imposing auditorium. The College trains students in different skills through NIPUNI skill development center, music and fine arts through SANGEET VANITA.

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